

political quackery. It was a fiasco ending in a tragedy. It developed into pure religious madness, which is of interest to us only as showing that the common man in some districts of the empire was still capable of being deluded by fanatics who worked on his religious fancy by their revelations, and mixed up social reform with religious quackery. It is only fair to remember, however, that all the sects slumped together under the opprobrious name of Anabaptists were not of the degraded stamp of the fanatics of Miinster. Many of these sectaries were indeed most excellent Christians, but they had little or no influence on social and political development, and were superciliously regarded as the outcasts of society. They nevertheless deserve remembrance as the champions, in their own religious way, of mind and conscience, not only against the traditions of the Church but against the biblical dogmatism of Luther. They showed a staunch spirit of resistance to tyranny, whether secular or ecclesiastical, and, if not always reasonable, its heroic persistence was admirable. They would not fight against their fellow-men; they protested loudly against mere conventional opinion. Some of their objections seemed puerile enough. Eccentric persons we should call them, but the eccentric person is sometimes needful, and Anabaptists of this type may claim to have belonged to the enlightened few of their age. Even simple men like Henitz Krauth and Jobst Moller and Hans Peissker could teach the learned dogmatist at Wittenberg some salutary truths. "God," said these simple men to Melancthon, "was not such a God as would damn a little child for the sake of a drop of water." And for such opinions these simple men were condemned to die, with Melancthon's approval, by the Lutheran secular authority. And the freer theological tendency represented by such men as Denck, Schwenkfeld, Sebastian Franck, certainly did not deserve the hatred which thirsted for their blood. We like such men all the better because their own age hated them.

SOURCES.—The following tracts of Luther in his Werke: *Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die 12 Artikel der Bauerschaft in Schwaben* (1525); *Wider die Morderischen und Rauberischen Kotten der Bauern* (1525); *Em Sendbrief von dem harten*